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ABSTRACT

In 1991-92, Napa Valley College participated in a statewide project to develop and publish this guide for recruiting and retaining underrepresented groups and special populations in vocational nursing. Among the highlighted recommendations presented in the guide are the following: (1) disseminate information on nursing education and job opportunities to special populations at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, providing profiles of and access to role models from these populations; (2) provide information on and access to financial aid and support services, such as child care, tutoring, and skills centers; (3) develop a statement describing proficiencies required for success; (4) help enrolled nursing students develop self-esteem, personal motivation, and effective study, self-improvement, and life skills; (5) ensure basic competency in math, English, and critical thinking; (6) provide enrolled students with access to support groups, study groups, "buddy system" programs with peers, support services, and adequate time to study; (7) ensure adequate financial support; (8) develop a stated program philosophy reflecting the commitment of faculty to working with special population students; (9) provide appropriate assessment, testing, and referral services for students; (10) continually assess the relevancy of admission, curriculum, and graduation requirements; (11) develop learning materials, teaching strategies, and evaluation procedures appropriate to the special needs of students, and provide related staff development activities; (12) model cultural diversity throughout the curriculum, on the Advisory Committee, and within the faculty; and (13) develop job placement opportunities for graduates. Ten references and "Creating Success for Students in the Nursing Program: Shifting the Paradigm," by Ron Rhyno are attached. (JSP)

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Recruiting and Retaining Under-represented Groups and Special Populations in Vocational Nursing

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Dean Health Occupations

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Secretary

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RECRUITING AND RETAINING UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS AND SPECIAL POPULATIONS IN NURSING PROGRAMS

Napa Valley College
October 1991- June 1992

Doris Zylinski
Dean Health Occupations

Elena Metson
Secretary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Napa Valley College received a continuation grant for a statewide project which addressed the need for a Comparative Study of the Current Vocational Nursing Curriculum in its Relationship to Employer Requirements. One of the objectives of that grant was to develop and publish a guide for recruiting and retaining underrepresented groups and special populations in vocational nursing.

RECRUITMENT

- for success in the recruitment of the special population/underrepresented groups and student in nursing programs the program should:

1. Disseminate information on nursing on a regular basis to the special populations through a planned outreach program.
   (include profiles of successful graduates)

2. Develop a targeted recruitment program.
   (use recruiters and role models from the special population being recruited)

3. Maintain continued dialogue with traditionally underrepresented groups and their families at elementary, middle, and high school levels using both written and verbal communications.
   (in native language if appropriate)
   (in both group and individual settings)

4. Promote access to role models from the under represented group by arranging meetings between them and prospective students.

5. Provide information and access to financial aid.
   (in native language if appropriate)

6. Provide information and access to support services.
   (child care, tutoring, skills center, ESL, etc.)
   (in native language if appropriate)

7. Invite special population students to tour programs, attend career fairs, visit the Career Re entry programs, etc.

8. Provide job opportunity information to prospective students, emphasizing societal need and employer's desire to hire.

9. Develop an effective retention program for special population students.

10. Develop a statement of readiness describing proficiencies for success.

RETENTION

- for success in the retention of the underrepresented and special population student in the nursing program -

The student needs:

1. Reinforcement of self-esteem and confidence.

2. Personal motivation and educational commitment.

3. Competency in basic skills in math, English and critical thinking.
   - to be able to read, write and comprehend the English language-

4. Effective study skills.

5. Assistance with developing self improvement skills, self confidence and life skills.

6. Access to support groups, individual counseling study groups and "buddy system " programs with peers.

7. Access to tutoring services and mentoring program.

8. Access to successful role models from same special populations.

9. Adequate support services (tutoring, skills center, child care, transportation, etc.)

10. Adequate financial support.

11. Adequate time and appropriate setting to study.

The program should:

1. Develop a stated philosophy which reflects the commitment of the faculty to working with the student from the special population which incorporates the belief that each student can succeed given adequate time and resources.

2. Provide resources necessary to meet the needs of the student as outlined above.

3. Provide appropriate assessment and testing services.

4. Provide appropriate referral services for special needs of students.

5. Continually assess the relevancy of admission and graduation requirements making certain that artificial barriers are eliminated and that students are provided the opportunity to demonstrate success.

6. Continually adapt the curriculum and the program requirements to meet the needs of the special population student and client.

7. Develop appropriate learning materials, teaching strategies and styles, testing and evaluation procedures that fit the special needs of the students.

8. Teach student test taking techniques/state board style.

9. Provide staff development activities for faculty in terms of:
   a) the unique conflicts for men in nursing
   b) how to work effectively with non-traditional students
   c) overcoming biased and stereotyped perceptions and attitudes of the "ideal nurse"
   d) creating a climate for learning that promotes success for the special population student
   e) redefining expectations of success
   f) changing teaching styles and techniques
   g) conducting relevant testing and evaluation
   h) comtemporary information and insights about special population characteristics and learning styles

10. Integrate cultural diversity information and modeling throughout the curriculum.

11. Reflect underrepresented groups on Advisory Committee.

12. To the extent possible, reflect cultural diversity in action in terms of faculty composition.

13. Pursue the development of mentoring and work study programs for student nurses.

14. Develop job placement opportunities for graduates.

GUIDE

RECRUITING AND RETAINING UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS AND SPECIAL POPULATIONS IN NURSING PROGRAMS

This Guide addresses the issues related to recruiting and retaining underrepresented groups and special populations in California Community College Vocational Nursing Programs and makes recommendations to improve success in meeting this goal.

In most instances, the issues and recommendations, as documented by the literature search, are the same for both Vocational and Associate Degree Nursing Programs. Thus, the report will use the term nursing programs and specify if the information is different for either group.

The new Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990 (VATEA) is designed to promote access and to improve vocational education programs which serve the highest concentration of special populations. The Act defines special populations as students from the following groupings:

a) students who participate in programs designed to eliminate sex bias, including activities to meet the needs of single parents and displaced homemakers

b) students who are academically or economically disadvantaged

c) students with disabilities

d) criminal offenders (if applicable)

Nursing has traditionally been stereotyped as a "women's" profession. In recent years the number of men in nursing has increased but the numbers still are small compared to the number of women. The number of men in vocational nursing still remains extremely low. Because of the disproportionate number of women to men, many nursing programs are considered "gender imbalanced" by VATEA criteria which is defined as a 20-80% ratio.

Since nursing primarily attracts women, the number of single parents and displaced homemakers in nursing programs is significant. A large number of the single parents and displaced homemakers are also likely to be both educationally and economically disadvantaged.

The basis of nursing practice requires the ability to perform a number of skills which require a certain level of physical fitness. Students with certain types of disabilities are limited in terms of being able to accomplish these skills. Students with limited English proficiency and math skills encounter problems in terms of successfully completing nursing programs and state board examinations.

VATEA funding can finance activities aimed at overcoming the sex bias stereotyping of nursing programs by increasing access for the underrepresented groups. It can also be used to improve the programs so that students from special populations have a greater opportunity for success. Specific suggestions for improving programs to enhance the success of the special population students are cited in the report.

RECRUITMENT

The majority of Associate Degree Nursing Programs currently have a waiting list for admission but have an underrepresentation of special population students on these lists. Several Vocational Nursing programs in California have closed due to lack of student interest. Others have waiting lists for admission. Vocational nursing programs are popular in areas where the health facilities use vocational nurses as primary care givers. Health facilities tend to use vocational nurses more when a good program is available in the community.

Programs that have been successful in terms of increasing the number of special population students have developed and implemented recruitment programs directed at identified targeted populations. The program must be designed in such a manner to understand the specific needs of that particular group both in terms of information and support services. Successful programs use recruiters and role models from the special populations being recruited.

In general, success in recruitment appears to be related to stimulating interest in nursing at an early age by creating a positive image of nursing as a career. Thus, access to the special population groups at an early age is of primary importance. This access should begin in the primary grades and become formalized in the middle school and high school years when students are starting to think in terms of life careers. Parents are very influential in terms of guiding the paths of students so information on nursing as a career needs to go directly to parents of traditionally underrepresented groups. Successful recruitment begins at this level. It should not be left to a college career or a second career choice.

A study of Student Selection and Retention in Nursing Schools, Health Manpower References, NLN, indicated the need to gain wider and more comprehensive recruitment by pooling manpower resources with local schools thus expanding the geographic scope of recruitment coverage. They also cited the need for increased funding to recruit special population students and recommended providing these students with special brochures and encouraging them to apply early so they are competitive on the waiting lists.

Other programs have increased the number of special population students by hiring recruiters from the special population groups to work directly with that group by promoting an interest in nursing and in actually recruiting them into the programs. Having access to successful role models appears to motivate young students to enter specific careers. "Seeing is believing" as the old saying goes.

The literature over and over again indicates the need for financial assistance up front for students from special populations to support their interest in enrolling in career programs. Financial aid counselors need to be a part of the recruitment team to ensure that students are aware of all of their options for funding prior to enrolling in nursing programs. Students also need early information on the availability of support services such as child care, tutoring, skills center, ESL classes. These are important aspects of any recruitment program.

During the recruitment phase, students with physical disabilities need to be given the opportunity through the use of the skills lab to determine for themselves whether they can perform the skills required to satisfactorily complete the nursing curriculum. Students with physical handicaps that can be corrected need to be assessed and assured that with these modifications they can succeed in a nursing career. Others should be redirected to other health careers which do not require the physical ability of nursing practice.

Students who are educationally disadvantaged need to be directed to the appropriate resources as soon as they are identified as having an interest in nursing so that upon admission they can be assured that they possess the necessary basic skills to succeed.

In summary, major factors which assist in the recruitment of underrepresented groups are:

1) Disseminate information on nursing on a regular basis to the special populations through a planned outreach program.
   (include profiles of successful graduates)

2) Develop a targeted recruitment program.
   (use recruiters and role models from the special population being recruited)

3) Maintain continued dialogue with traditionally underrepresented groups and their families at middle and high school level using both written and verbal communications.
   (in native language if appropriate)
   (in both group and individual settings)

4) Promote access to role models from the under represented groups by arranging meetings between them and prospective students.

5) Provide information and access to financial aid.
   (in native language if appropriate)

6) Provide information and access to support services.
   (child care, tutoring, skills center, ESL, etc.)
   (in native language if appropriate)

7) Invite special population students to tour programs, attend college fairs, visit the Career Re-Entry Programs, etc.

8) Provide job opportunity information to prospective students.

9) Develop an effective retention program for special population students.

RETENTION

Once students are admitted to nursing programs, the priority immediately shifts from admission to retention. During recent years with the emphasis on increasing the number of underrepresented groups in the programs, the need for special services to ensure retention has gained importance.

"Attention must be focused from predictive selection to effective retention of candidates" was stated in the article 'High Risk Nursing Students; Emergency of Remedial/Developmental Programs' by Reed, Hudepohl published in the Nurse Educator, 1983. They stated that the presence of high risk students has forced schools of nursing to analyze instructional processes and develop skills in helping students to help themselves. Bright students learn in spite of unclear objectives, bad exams and poor teachers. The average student, in order to succeed, needs clearly defined measurable objectives, learning experiences that help the student achieve the objectives, clinicals that reinforce or expand on the classroom content and well constructed examinations based on specific objectives. Successful programs for disadvantaged students offer academic remediation, cultural enrichment and personal counseling.

Many projects nationwide have demonstrated that high risk students are successful when certain program elements are in place. Project TAP (Tutorial Advancement Program) findings identified that "the economically and educationally deprived can do well in nursing school, given a little special help." Students selected for the project were students who had been rejected by admissions based on their College Qualification Test Score or high school grades. " Strong points of the program included residential living, group counseling sessions, stipend and the programmed instruction which allowed each student to progress at his own individual speed ." Recommendations from that project included: placing a stronger emphasis on math skills, devoting more time to assisting the student in gaining proficiency in English and increasing tutorial services. Faculty energies need to be focused on retention not on prediction of success factors for prospective students.

Success in Nursing; A Primary Intervention Course by Coker, University of Southwestern Louisiana in 1989 focused on the success of a developmental course which focused on academic and self improvement, study skills, reading and comprehension skills, self actualization and critical thinking in assisting students to succeed.

Student support services, faculty development and peer tutoring were the basis of an Academic Enrichment Project for Disadvantaged Students reported by Burris, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 1990.

In 1989 a study at Miami Dade Community College concluded: "Fifty-five percent of the students with adequate basic reading skills received grades of A or B in the nursing core course while only 19% of those needing college prep work performed as well. Ninety percent of the students with adequate reading basic

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skills obtained a 2.0 GPA or better, while only 65% of the College Prep Work students had a 2.0 or better. Fifty percent of the students who had three or more repeats of prerequisite courses earned a GPA of less than 2.0. The best predictor of first term GPA was a combination of reading basic skills and the number of repeats in prerequisite science courses.

The literature search documents that success in retaining high risk students in nursing programs and passing state examinations is directly related to their competency in basic skills in math and English, critical thinking and study habits. The increased need for counseling services, tutorial assistance and access to group sessions and/or study groups is of primary importance as well. Adequate financial aid, student support services such as child care and time to study correlate directly with success.

There are also specific needs that address concerns of special population groupings. A questionnaire distributed to Native American registered nurses to discover what factors helped them to succeed showed that personal characteristics were significant as was peer support from other Native Americans in a report on Native American Registered Nurses and State Board Examinations by Kulig, Journal of American Indian Education, January 1987. The importance of peer support from "like students" in individual and group meetings was identified .

Haney, Russell and others, reported in the Educational and Psychological Measurement, in 1977 that the "success of student nurses from three ethnic groups on a state board certification exam was predicted from study behavior, GPA and standardized achievement tests with the latter being the best predictor across groups." The two most valid tests were the California Achievement tests on reading comprehension and vocabulary. Total course GPA was a more valid predictor of success than grades in individual courses.

Identifying male students in nursing as minorities, the Nurse Educator/September/October 1981, Tumminia reported that "male students encounter unique conflicts in the nursing education process that can interfere with their learning ability and ultimately their success. Generally the difficulties fall into three major categories: conflict between role stereotype of the American male and that of the nurse, minority status in a female dominated faculty-student group and lack of male nursing role models. According to Story, minority upper classmen in nursing cited eight reasons for freshman year difficulties. Of these eight, several are shared by male students: (1) under-utilization of minority role models, (2) inadequate career counseling, (3) cultural shock, (4) inadequate preparation in mathematics and science courses, (5) academic deficiencies in basic skills, (6) financial and personal hardships, (7) lack of knowledge of available resources at the university, (8) negative self image of minority groups in professional schools."

The same report recommends conferences for male students to explore the society's view of man as a nurse and the reaction of close friends, family and the public about his choice of an occupation. It also recommends that prior to going to the clinical area that the group discuss possible reactions of patients, doctors and nurses to his nursing role and participate in stereotyping role exercises designed to assist the male student in developing successful methods of coping with negative reactions.

Many studies stressed the need for staff development activities aimed at increasing the nursing instructor's awareness of the needs of the special population students and to help develop insight and skills to address individual and group differences in learning styles while maintaining high academic standards.

The nursing program philosophy should reflect the commitment of the faculty to working with the student from the special populations. It should reflect belief in the student that he/she can succeed given adequate time and instructional support. The curriculum should use clearly defined objectives and criterion reference tests with appropriate learning experiences, both theoretical and clinical, designed to assist the student in achieving the objectives.

Schools with flexible curriculum and class scheduling had a high retention of black students as did schools with extensive funding was the summary of the Feldman study on Recruitment Strategies in the Health Professions.

In summary, for success in the retention of the special population student in the nursing program the student needs:

1) Competency in basic skills in math, English, and critical thinking.
   - to be able to read, write and comprehend the English language -

2) Effective study skills.

3) Personal motivation and educational commitment.

4) Assistance with developing self improvement skills, self confidence and life skills.

5) Access to support groups, individual counseling, study groups and "buddy system" programs with peers.

6) Access to tutoring services and mentoring program.

7) Access to successful role models of same special populations.

8) Adequate support services (tutoring, skills center, child care, transportation etc.)

9) Adequate financial support.

10) Adequate time and appropriate setting to study.

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The program should:

1) Develop a stated philosophy which reflects the commitment of the faculty to working with the student from the special population which incorporates the belief that each student can succeed given adequate time and resources.

2) Provide resources necessary to meet the needs of the students as outlined above.

3) Provide appropriate assessment and testing services.

4) Provide appropriate referral services for special needs of the students.

5) Continually assess the relevancy of admission and graduation requirements making certain that artificial barriers are eliminated and that students are provided the opportunity to demonstrate success.

6) Continually adapt the curriculum and program requirements to meet the needs of the special population student and client.

7) Develop appropriate learning materials, teaching strategies and styles, testing and evaluation procedures that fit the needs of the special population students.

8) Teach student test taking techniques/ state board style.

9) Provide staff development activities for faculty in terms of:

   a) the unique conflicts for men in nursing
   b) how to work effectively with non-traditional students
   c) overcoming biased and stereotyped perceptions and attitudes of the "ideal nurse"
   d) creating a climate for learning that promotes success for the special population students
   e) redefining expectations of success
   f) changing styles and techniques of testing and evaluation
   g) conducting relevant testing and evaluation
   h) providing contemporary information and insights about special population characteristics and learning styles

10) Integrate cultural diversity issues throughout the curriculum.

11) Reflect underrepresented groups on Advisory Committee.

12) To the extent possible, reflect cultural diversity in action in terms of faculty composition.

13) Pursue the development of mentoring and work study programs for nursing students.

14) Develop job placement opportunities for graduates.

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Creating Success for Student in the Nursing Program
- Shifting the Paradigm -

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Among the critical questions which continue to occupy the educational agenda is: Why do members of some ethnic minority (New Majority) groups tend to have lower educational achievement than mainstream American students.

Historically, three theoretical frameworks have been used to explain the academic, and resultant corollary income and occupational non-success of minority groups in America. The three are genetic inferiority, cultural deficit, and cultural mismatch. The table below (from Sue & Padilla, 1986) describes the three theoretical frameworks, attribution of responsibility and primary solutions, as well as a more contemporary framework, Contextual Interaction.

Theories of Academic Non-Success
Assignment of Responsibility and Solutions or Treatments

Theory	Assignment of Responsibility	Solution/Treatments
1. Genetic Inferiority- minorities fail to do well because they are genetically inferior.	The groups themselves, not society, are responsible.	No solutions are possible since little can be done to change heredity.
2. Cultural Deficit- minorities fail to do well because their culture is deficient.	The groups themselves, as well as social prejudice and discrimination, are responsible.	Train minorities to be less deficient and eliminate prejudice and discrimination.
3. Cultural mismatch- minorities fail to achieve because their cultural traits and skills are different than the United States mainstream.	No one is responsible since cultures just happen to be different.	Acculturate groups so that they can participate in the mainstream, but also modify schools in order to better accommodate and ameliorate the mismatch.
4. Contextual Interaction minorities fail to achieve because of an interaction of many factors.	No one factor, group, or institution is responsible since outcomes are produced through the interaction of many factors such as circumstances, cultural values, etc.	Change one or more of the factors or the context to alter the interaction and thereby change the outcomes.

Models explain our view or understanding of how and why things are the way they are. The model most prevalent in explaining New Majority non-success has been and remains the Cultural Deficit (CD) Model. The solutions emanating

from this framework focus upon both student treatments prior to, and outside of the classroom context, and legal mandates and institutional policies to prevent and elimination prejudice and discrimination. The educational focus of this model is to "fix the student" - prior to the classroom experience. Student Services and Learning Skills personnel bear the burden of preparing "underprepared" students as determined by test assessments, counselor and instructor assessments, and unsuccessful classroom experiences. What the CD Model ignores is the primacy of the classroom dynamic in aiding more students to be successful in spite of institutionally perceived deficiencies. Perceived and actual relationships with instructors and classmates, curriculum content, and curriculum delivery are four key elements in the rich but underutilized classroom context for guided student learning, perhaps best exemplified in cooperative or collaborative learning classroom strategies.

In a recent study (Catlin, 1991), as hypothesized, 24% New Majority student enrollees disproportionally represented (41%) of all non-successes in a five-year ADN program study. The apparent assumption is that these students were in some way academically underprepared (deficient). However, of the non-successes, 52% passed the first semester ADN course and 39% passed the second semester course. In light of these facts, the question of student underpreparation becomes problematic and requires closer examination and explanation.

The most recent, and in this writer's opinion most comprehensive, theoretical model, the Context Interaction Model (CI) poses a broad and extensive interaction and effect of non-school societal factors upon the three primary areas of school context and educational process: Educational Input Factors, Instructional Elements, and Student Qualities (Sue & Padilla, 1986).

Non-school societal factors include: family (including home culture and language use), community (including ethnic community), non-school institutions, mass media, heritage-culture-ethnicity, attitudes (national and local), perceptions, socio-economic level, and educational level (self, family, peers).

Educational input factors include the knowledge, skills, expectations and attitudes of teachers, administrators, counselors, board members and other personnel, and the educational theories and assumptions which inform and create the school educational process.

Instructional elements include curriculum, textbooks and other educational materials, teaching strategies and styles, tests and testing procedures, counseling, student placement, evaluation plan, tutoring, mentoring, and staff development.

Student qualities include academic skills and knowledge, self-image, pro-social skills, educational motivation, goals for the future and proficiency in one or more languages.

Outside of the dimension of Student Qualities the dimensions of Instructional Elements and Educational Input factors provide important college controlled areas for college action.

The dimension of Educational Input factors is ground for creating an informed and knowledgeable staff about the indications of new research and scholarship

for effective minority student treatments. In this dimension new and current research and scholarship about productive educational practices interact with prevalent societal beliefs, assumptions, and understandings to redefine what we know, what we theorize and what we create as solutions for New Majority student success.

The dimension of instructional elements is a major and primary ground within college control for making changes to enhance minority success. Curriculum structure and delivery, textbooks, teaching strategies and styles, tests and testing procedure, tutoring, and mentoring in the CI model are not neutral ground, but rather elements which interact with student qualities to create outcomes of one form or another.

The ability of the college and its staff to control these two dimensions of educational inputs and instructional elements offers the best practical opportunity to enhance student success. We have an infinitely greater degree of control, and room for change, in what we know about the student and what we do in the classroom than for the qualities the student brings to us. To put these two dimensions to work will require increased understanding of the new research insights about our New Majority students, a thorough and positive examination of our practices, and an intent to make changes based upon new scholarship and practices in other colleges and universities.

In this writer's opinion, creating success for the New Majority will result in greater success for all underrepresented and mainstream students. Shifting the paradigm of student success will, in this decade, require us to focus upon the ultimate ground of our educational process - the classroom.

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